

4 seek nomination for Lake commissioner

John Arthur Hutchison

JHutchison@News-Herald.com
Twitter: @newshealdjah

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Democratic and Republican primary voters will each have their choice of two candidates to nominate March 6 to run for Lake County commissioner for the four-year term commencing Jan. 3.

Democratic candidates are incumbent Robert E. Aufuldish of Wickliffe and Daniel W. Tharp of Mentor. Republican candidates are Leroy Township Trustee Linda Burhenne and Madison Village Councilman John R. Hamercheck.

There are 148,750 registered voters in the county for the March 6 primary.

Of that total, there are 10,954 Democrats and 12,285 Republicans, but many could decide to switch parties for the primary and independent voters could select to vote a Democratic or Republican ballot and therefore become a member of the respective party.

The annual salary for the commissioner position is \$76,976.

Here is what the candidates had to say on their election questionnaires.



Aufuldish



Tharp

Democrats Aufuldish

Aufuldish, 77, has served as commissioner since 1997, Wickliffe mayor from 1986 to 1993, and Wickliffe councilman from 1980 until he became mayor.

He said it's imperative to keep experience and a steady hand on the board especially after recent steps to balance the budget through a 0.5 percent sales tax increase, 1.0-mill reduction in property taxes and 50 percent reduction in Stormwater Management Department fees.

"Having laid off 22 percent of our work force (we) want to establish a new platform for employee growth," Aufuldish said.

"Not all of these workers need to be called back or replaced. We need to be very careful that the new revenue is not used for that purpose."

He wants to set up a sepa-

rate line item for retirement payouts and capital improvements as many county buildings have started to fall into disrepair.

Tharp

Tharp, 52, is a Mentor resident who works as a custodian for a business and has worked 17 years as a basketball official. This is his first run for political office and he aims to identify ways that all areas of government can decrease spending while increasing efficiency and productivity.

Tharp wants to reestablish accountability between elected officials and county residents, and he hopes to identify and eliminate wasteful items.

"I am suited to become Lake County commissioner, people like me, they like who I am," he said.

"Honest, sincere trustworthy and a person who will look out for all Lake County residents, towns and cities as a whole. We will have a bright future."

Tharp said he has dealt with people in many different ways and would create and implement policies that eliminate work force bullying.



Burhenne



Hamercheck

Republicans Burhenne

Burhenne, 58, is government records manager for Geauga County commissioners, has served as a Leroy Township trustee for the past 10 years and prior to that she was a Riverside Schools board member for eight years.

She would try to persuade the other two commissioners to engage in a complete review of the county's governance including finance, policy, and contracts with both employment and vendors.

"I am a proven fiscal conservative; my government service — from helping rescue the Riverside Schools to managing a county department — is testimony to my ability to apply unshakable principles and diligence to the work of public service," Burhenne said.

Burhenne said she never forgets the privilege to be a public servant or the resources for which she cares.

Hamercheck

Hamercheck, 47, works in the electrical/electronic engineering field and has served as a member of Madison Village Council since 2006, including 2008 through 2011 as council president.

He said the commissioners' office needs to move from what he says amounts to a policy of exclusion to a policy of inclusion.

"Participation from the general public to subject matter experts must be sought, evaluated and incorporated into the decision-making process," Hamercheck said.

"Decisions based on political expediency must cease."

He said that his 24 years in business and elected service has allowed him to become known for delivering and sustaining tangible results within highly challenging circumstances, including helping the village to have a carryover balance of \$1.4 million.